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Letter dated 16 May 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Uganda to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

On instructions of my Government, and in view of the recent developments in Bunia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a statement made in Kampala on 8 May 2003 by Lt. Gen. Moses Ali, Second Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Disaster Preparedness (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Semakula **Kiwanuka**
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative of Uganda to the United Nations

03-36436 (E) 200503

Annex to the letter dated 16 May 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Uganda to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Statement made on 8 May 2003 by Lt. Gen. Moses Ali, Second Deputy Prime Minister/Minister for Disaster Preparedness

1. I would like to reiterate that in fulfilment of the Luanda Agreement between the Government of Uganda and the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the subsequent Dar es Salaam Agreement and the establishment of the Ituri Pacification Commission, and in compliance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, the Uganda Government has completed withdrawal of its forces from Bunia, eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Uganda Government is, therefore, no longer responsible for the maintenance of security in Ituri province.

2. The Government of Uganda warned the international community that the withdrawal of the Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF) without deployment of adequate United Nations forces would create a security vacuum that would lead to flares of the Lendu-Hema conflict, which had been contained by UPDF. The current United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) and elements of the Congolese police deployment has proved inadequate.

3. Following the withdrawal of Ugandan forces, inter-ethnic conflict erupted and as a result, there has been an influx of citizens of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, mainly Hema, seeking asylum in Uganda. As of yesterday, between 25,000 and 30,000 had crossed at Rwebisengo near Fort Portal and another 25,000 to 30,000 at Nebbi. It is expected that this inflow will increase. This has resulted in a humanitarian crisis. Hence, the urgent need for food, water and shelter for the refugees. The Uganda Government is, therefore, making this special appeal to the international community for humanitarian assistance. The Government is also inviting you to visit the refugees in order to assess the situation for yourselves.

4. The situation in Ituri is grave and delicate and the Government of Uganda calls upon the United Nations to fully exercise its mandate and expand the role of MONUC from peace monitoring to peace enforcement by moving away from Chapter VI to Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations. The Uganda Government further calls upon the Security Council to increase the deployment of MONUC to fill the security vacuum which arose as a result of UPDF withdrawal from Ituri province.